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SUBJECT: Comments on the Report to the NSC on Research
and National Security Policy

2. While we believe that research and analysis can do much to develop new policy approaches and programs, we do not agree with Mr. Rock's recommendation to establish a new office of special studies within the NSC Staff because we feel strongly that the research facilities already available to the U. S. Government and the Clandestine Services are entirely adequate. The real problem is not the establishment of a new governmental office for research activities, but rather the more efficient use of existing facilities and closer coordination with those departments of the U. S. Government which have similar research requirements.

3. A mechanism for coordinating social science research, the Social Science Research Group (SSRG), was established in 1955 and was headed by the Special Assistant to the Director of Central Intelligence for Planning and Coordination. Meetings were attended by the Chief, External Research Staff, Department of State; the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (RMD); the Chief, External Research Division, USIA; and the Chief, Special Support Staff, OCB. The Defense Department organized an advisory panel on research and special operations which also served to coordinate government interest in external research activities. This panel has since been discontinued and the Social Science Research Group has not been very active.

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4. While we realize that Mr. Rock's proposals go beyond the field of social science research, we feel that our experience in this field is applicable to the range of problems which he raises. It seems important to us to reinforce the existing mechanisms of interagency coordination and to guide more effectively the research which is being conducted by private institutions for U. S. Government departments. The application of the findings of academic research to operational and policy problems is of continuing concern because there is an inherent difficulty in translating governmental requirements into research terms. To be effective, contract research should proceed from an intimate knowledge of U. S. Government objectives and must be based on a real understanding of the special problems which departmental officers face in the execution of such policies. The many established private research facilities have gained some experience in accepting governmental guidance and are not only capable of producing the research support required by individual agencies, but are also in a position to conduct special studies which might be requested by the President or the National Security Council. Academic research organizations generally are more interested in undertaking the kind of interdisciplinary policy research suggested by Mr. Rock than they are in supporting the more operationally oriented requirements of individual agencies. Through years of experience, such organizations as CENIS and RAND have acquired that extensive knowledge about foreign areas and U. S. Governmental operations which are so essential for the planning of effective research programs. The answer to problems which can be solved through external research does not lie in the establishment of a new office, but rather in the effective use of existing facilities available to U. S. Government agencies.

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